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# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## Legislators meet for prayer breakfast

By William H. Perkins, Jr.  
 Editor

Attendance at the annual Mississippi Baptist Legislative Prayer Breakfast on January 8 at the Baptist Building in Jackson was the highest in the history of the four-year event, according to Jimmy Porter, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

The Skyroom on the fourth floor of the Baptist building was packed with legislators and pastors from around the state, as well as state officials and staffers of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, which among its many duties tracks legislative matters for Mississippi Baptists during annual legislative sessions, sponsors the breakfast each year. Gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program fund the gathering.

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, stressed to the legislators in attendance that the breakfast was not a high-pressure lobbying event but rather a special time to pray for the lawmakers and their families, since they are separated from their families during the annual legislative sessions.

Futral assured them of the prayers of Mississippi Baptists as they make the difficult decisions in the days ahead that will affect the future of the state.

Among the biggest challenges facing lawmakers in this session will be balancing the state budget, in light of anemic state and national economies that have lowered tax revenue.

Porter echoed Futral's remarks, stating, "This is not a lobbying function. We strictly want them to know that Mississippi Baptist are praying for them."

Over a breakfast of eggs, bacon, biscuits, and fresh fruit, legislators heard from Futral, Porter, and Mississippi Baptist Convention President Gene Henderson, pastor of First Church, Brandon.



**TOGETHER FOR PRAYER** — Jim Futral (right), executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, talks with State Rep. Brian Aldridge (center), a member of West Heights Church in Pontotoc, and State Auditor Phil Bryant, a member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Brandon, during the annual Legislative Prayer Breakfast on January 8 at the Baptist Building in Jackson. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

"This is a great opportunity for new legislators to get acquainted with Mississippi Baptists — and there are a lot of new legislators in this session," said Porter of the first legislative session since statewide elections were held in November 2003.

"There seems to be a lot of excitement in the air," Porter observed. "From my perspective, I'm impressed with the quality of these legislators and the spirit they are bringing to this session."

The highest-ranking state officials in attendance were Secretary of State Eric Clark, a member of First Church,

Brandon, and State Auditor Phil Bryant, a member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Brandon.

To contact legislators while in session, write to P.O. Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018. Telephone: Legislature Switchboard (601) 359-3770. For individual e-mail addresses, go to [www.ls.state.ms.us](http://www.ls.state.ms.us).

For more information on the programs of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, contact Porter at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3332 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 332. E-mail: [jporter@mbcb.org](mailto:jporter@mbcb.org).

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Directions

Practical Principles

Sunday School Lessons

Baptist Children's Village

### Miss. CP finishes strong

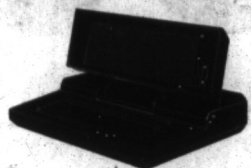
Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) posted a strong showing in December that allowed the fiscal year to end just 3.12% under the budgeted amount, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) which disburses the funds. Mississippi Baptists gave \$3,032,981 to CP in December, making it the fifth-highest monthly posting in Mississippi CP history. The December total also pushed giving for the year to \$30,606,494 — an increase of .2% over the previous year and a new all-time annual record. However, the final total fell short by \$986,293 (3.12%) of the budgeted amount of \$31,592,787 that was approved by messengers to the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The MBCB fiscal year runs from January-December. Mississippi CP helps fund such programs as the Baptist Doctrine Study in January at various locations around the state; the Chaplains Winter Retreat on January 16-17 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton; and the annual Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference on January 26-27 at Country Woods Church, Jackson.

### SBC CP up for Dec.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are up 6.88% compared to the same time frame in 2002, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of Dec. 31, 2003, the year-to-date total of \$45,269,709.85 for Cooperative Program (CP) missions is \$2,913,303.29 ahead of the \$42,356,406.56 received at the same point in 2002. For the month, receipts of \$13,583,159.85 were 9.15%, or \$1,138,776.11, above the \$12,444,383.74 received in December 2002. Designated giving of \$12,348,124.29 for the same year-to-date period is 21.85%, or \$2,214,608.79 above gifts of \$10,133,715.94 received at this point in 2002. The \$4,248,725.35 in designated gifts received last month is \$405,422.30 above the \$3,843,303.05 of December 2002, a 10.55% increase. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$45,269,709.85 is 99.32% of the \$45,580,777.50 budgeted, or \$311,067.65 under budget to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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## Dear Legislator...

**T**he 2004 session of the Mississippi Legislature is revving up to full-speed, as proposed legislation moves to committees and will soon be coming up on a series of deadlines.

As anyone knows who even casually tracks the annual three-month sessions of the Legislature, many bills are introduced but relatively few make it into law. The complex set of checks and balances both inside the legislative process and in the broader branches of state government have a tendency to winnow the hundreds and hundreds of bills that are filed and pre-filed for each session.

Legislators have to absorb their share of criticism, cynicism, and caricature during their time under the hoary domes of the New Capitol in downtown Jackson. Some of the ridicule showered on them is likely deserved (by some of them, anyway), but a fair amount is not deserved.

They are, after all, our fellow Mississippians. For every citizen who couldn't find their way to either chamber in the Capitol but feels free to regularly slam legislators, there are at least a few of us who realize that most legislators are well-meaning people who must put aside their families, businesses, and community activities for one-quarter of each year to come to Jackson for the session.

That's no small sacrifice, so it would behoove us to occasionally tell them how much we appreciate the effort even as we loudly complain about what we perceive they are doing or not doing.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) has some helpful hints on how to make contact with legislators, how to get a point across without dooming favored legislation, and how to follow up on the progress of important measures:

- **The best communicating is done face-to-face.** Make an appointment and be on time. Bring an outline of the one or two main issues you want to discuss. Be brief, recommend specific solutions, and leave a

written summary of your important points.

It's fair to ask the legislator for his/her position on the bills in which you are interested. Don't take it personally if the legislator disagrees. Rather than argue, discuss differences in a pleasant manner.

- **If a personal visit is not possible, write your legislator.** Writing can save a legislator's time (a plus in your favor) and provides a record of your position on proposed legislation. Include your full name, address, and telephone number. The address for legislators while in session is P.O. Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018.

Individual e-mail addresses can be accessed at [www.ls.state.ms.us](http://www.ls.state.ms.us)

- **Do your research.** Know the bills about which you are writing, and include any specific information you have such as the bill number and details. Bill status can be attained by calling (601) 359-3719 while the legislature is in session, or by going to [www.ls.state.ms.us](http://www.ls.state.ms.us).

- **Telephone calls do not substitute for personal visits and letters.** When telephoning legislators, however, make efficient use of your time with them. Identify yourself and the bills you are for or against (again, one or two main issues is a good limit). Explain your reasoning and let them know how you want them to vote.

The telephone number for legislators while they are in session is (601) 359-3770. Just as with personal visits and letters, end the conversation by expressing your thanks for their time.

- **Citizens can request to testify before committees about bills they strongly support or oppose.** Find out the name of the

**"IT'S GOOD TO FEEL NEEDED AGAIN."**



appropriate committee chairman and contact him as soon as possible. If given the opportunity to testify, get to the point quickly and be prepared to answer any questions legislators may have about your position.

The CAC, a ministry funded by the Mississippi Cooperative Program, stands ready to assist Mississippi Baptists who want to get involved in this grand process of self-governance we enjoy in our state and nation. They can be reached at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. Fax: (601) 292-3350. E-mail: [rwood@mbcb.org](mailto:rwood@mbcb.org).

Take the time to get involved, or else just be content with whatever comes out of the legislative pipeline. Those are really our only two choices.

## GUEST OPINION:



*His most  
important work*

By Leah Cox, member  
Pinelake Church, Brandon

human life is sacred because it was created in God's image. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible supports the theme of the sacredness of God's creation. Some ask, "If sacred, when does life begin?" God's word reveals His detailed involvement with each human life from before conception and onward. The psalmist speaks of life beginning in the womb: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...." (Psalm 139:13-14, NIV) There is no clearer instruction to us regarding the sanctity of human life as in Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill."

I am saddened to read that 43% of the women older than 17 years of age who obtained an

abortion were of protestant religious affiliation (Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, September 2002). Have we as Christians failed in our efforts in teaching the sacredness of the unborn human life? What can we do?

- Pray that women will choose life.
- Proclaim God's importance of all the born and unborn human life.
- Inform our youth of the possible consequences of promiscuous sex.
- Volunteer as a counselor at a crisis pregnancy center.
- Remain silent no longer, because our silence may be interpreted as support.

- Counsel with compassion and forgiveness to unwed mothers and encourage them to place their child in a loving home through adoption.

"Adoption, not abortion," has become more than just another slogan to me. I potentially could be one who abortion affects firsthand. Many families desire to adopt children but become frustrated because of the small number of children available for adoption. We are all adopted into God's family and what a blessing it would be to many families to adopt a child.

Although I have not yet felt the kick inside my womb, I am still reminded when seeing an expectant mother of God's incredible creative work of a human life. I continually seek God's will as I journey on the path of infertility and I will tell my story of a longing, empty womb to those who might question the value of life.

We should no longer remain silent.

*Cox is office manager for her husband's dental practice in Brandon.*

**SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY IS JANUARY 18, 2004**



# Lottie interest, giving on rise across country

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists are responding with vision and passion to this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) for International Missions, if early reports are an indicator.

This past summer, the International Mission Board (IMB) announced it was delaying the appointment of about 100 new missionaries because support from Southern Baptist churches had not grown as rapidly as the number of church members coming forward for overseas service. IMB President Jerry Rankin challenged Southern Baptists to respond by increasing their LMCO goals by 33 percent.

It appears that many churches thought even a 33% increase wasn't enough. For example, First Church of Grayson, Ky., a congregation with about 200 in Sunday School, set a church record when they gave \$2,500 to the 2002 Lottie Moon offering. The church was moved, however, by the news that new missionaries were having to wait for appointment and decided to set a goal of \$10,000 for this year's offering. Pastor John Newland told church members they could easily reach that goal if each church member set aside just three dollars a week for 17 weeks.

In the space of a few weeks, the church gave \$5,400 — more than twice the previous year's record amount. As of Dec. 14, the congregation had given \$6,466.

Beulah Church in Pensacola, Fla., surpassed its Lottie Moon goal in 2002 with an offering of \$1,500. Missions became more personal for the congregation of 110, however, when the son of their associate pastor was commissioned for overseas service.

This year, their pastor challenged the congregation to set a goal of \$1,500 and match it from their bank account if the goal was reached. When they received their offering, it totaled more than \$7,000.

Washington Church in Greer, S.C., had already increased its offering goal by 20% when pas-

When their contributions were totaled, the congregation was excited to see they had given \$12,488.84.

"I truly believe that many 'small' churches across the country will rise to the occasion as God prompts the hearts of His people to give so the Gospel will continue to go forth," pastor Clay Alexander wrote. "I look forward to seeing what God will do through the faithfulness of His people."

Martindale Church in south-central Texas has been dramatically raising its international missions offering goal for several years. In 2001, the congregation gave \$5,000, an increase of almost 50% over its offering two years earlier. Last year the church doubled its giving to more than \$10,000.

This year, pastor Glen Howe, himself a former North America Mission Board missionary, pointed out that the congregation was taking in about \$1,000 a month above its budgeted needs. He asked the church to apply those extra funds to expenses during December and use that month's offerings to increase their contribution to LMCO. Both the deacons and the congregation agreed to the proposal without discussion or debate.

"We're excited because we can see where the Lord could use us to give over \$20,000 — we could double what we gave last year," Howe said. "That has created a real air of excitement for us."

New Hope Church in Rock Hill, S.C., has always been generous in its support of the Christmas offering. Last year, the church, with about 100 in Sunday School and 150 in worship, surpassed their \$2,500 Lottie Moon goal by 20%.

This year, however, interim pastor Bob Freeland — a retired pastor who has led volunteer teams to Brazil for several years — challenged the church's Woman's Missionary Union to set a visionary goal. A goal of \$10,000 was announced, and by Dec. 7 church members had given \$11,461.

"What rejoicing at the end of the service when the amount was announced," Freeland said. "Shouting — not real loud — and clapping, and we burst into the doxology! It is exciting. Isn't that wonderful?"

Tiburon (Calif.) Church set a Lottie Moon goal of \$12,500 this year — the highest goal the church had ever set and more than twice what it had given in previous years.

The church, however, has been growing in its missions vision and passion, joining the IMB's Global Priority Network and adopting an unreached people group in the Middle East. On the first Sunday of its offering campaign, church members gave \$7,500, and they hit \$20,767 on the second Sunday.



**That all peoples  
may know Him  
Follow God's Purpose**

tor Andrew Hines challenged the congregation to raise it another \$4,000 and reach for a challenge goal of \$10,000.

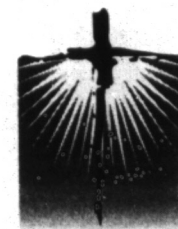
A young couple from the church, Kerry and Neltia Henderson, had just completed the "40 Days and 40 Nights" missionary field training in East Africa's bush country. Church members were excited when they received a letter from their new missionaries that asked everyone try to give \$100 more to the offering than they gave last year.

As of mid-December, the church had raised \$12,000 and was expecting to receive more before the end of the month.

In Wyoming, Wright Church, a congregation of 80 people, accepted a challenge goal of \$5,000 for their offering — an amount several times more than they had ever given.

## IMB combats abuse

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — In response to recent concerns expressed by victims who were sexually abused on the mission field 30 years ago, the International Mission Board (IMB) has created a hotline to help any victims of similar situations report their abusers and get help for their trauma. The toll-free number will help people report incidents of abuse or inappropriate relationships — either past or present — to IMB staff members who will respond to the concern, said Mark Whitworth, a member care consultant for the board and former missionary to Japan. The adoption of the phone number grew out of recent communications with people who experienced sexual abuse as children on the mission field in the late 1960s and early 1970s. "It's sad that things like this happen, especially to children and especially on the mission field," said Sharon Hawk, another member care consultant at the board who served as a missionary in Nigeria. "We know we are not immune to problems like this, and we want people to know that we care and that we are committed to reaching out to victims and dealing decisively with abusers." The International Mission Board has strict written policies that address sexual misconduct and outline procedures for handling known violations. Grounds for termination include sexual assault or harassment, pedophilia, and sexual misconduct involving a minor. The board maintains an ongoing review of sexual misconduct policies and provides continuous training of personnel to promote awareness and prevent sexual misconduct. Like the IMB, other Christian missions agencies also have responded to the concern by reviewing their policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct. Information about the toll-free number is being provided directly to current and former missionaries and their children.



MISSISSIPPI  
**BAPTISTS**

**THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE**

*THE BAPTIST*  
**Record**

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**NOBTS to  
offer classes  
in Quitman**

The Quitman Certificate Center in Quitman, an adjunct of New Orleans Seminary, will be offering four classes this spring in two separate associate-level Church Leadership Certificate Programs.

Classes offered in the Pastoral Ministry Certificate Program will be Baptist Doctrine, and Introduction to New Testament Survey. Classes offered in the Biblical Teaching Certificate Program will be Introduction to New Testament Study: Early Church, and Introduction to Old Testament Study: The Disciples.

Registration for the classes, which are open to both pastors and laypersons, will be on January 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clarke County Baptist Center located at 100 N. Jackson Avenue in Quitman. For more information, contact Quitman Certificate Center Director Jim Smith at (601) 776-6050 days or (601) 776-5966 evenings.

## Looking back

### 10 years ago

Crews from the Mississippi Baptist's Disaster Relief Team are on standby to assist in the aftermath of the Southern California earthquake that occurred in the early hours of January 17, Paul Harrell, Brotherhood director, said several crews may go to prepare meals.

### 20 years ago

Despite strong objections from most religious quarters, the U.S. establishes full diplomatic relations with the Vatican on January 10. James T. Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Tex., and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, expresses extreme disappointment.

### 50 years ago

Sunny Hill Mission, located a few miles west of McComb and operating as an arm of the Tangipahoa Church, is organized into a Baptist church under the name of Sunny Hill Church. The membership numbers around 80 with an annual budget of \$4,793.



# Zogby: Presidential race 'very contentious'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A deep divide exists between states George Bush carried in the 2000 election and those Al Gore carried, according to an O'Leary Report/Zogby International poll released on January 6.

tral, 13% unfriendly)," the Pew news release continued. "By comparison, African Americans are nearly twice as likely to say that the Democratic Party is friendly toward religion as to say that about the Republicans (53% vs. 27%)."

The Zogby poll was commissioned by the O'Leary report published by political analyst Bradley S. O'Leary. Zogby International, based in Utica, N.Y., surveyed 1,200 likely voters from Dec. 15-19 on various issues, including abortion, same-sex "marriage," religion, tax cuts, Social Security reform and gun rights.

## THE CLINTON DIVIDE

The poll found that voter opinions "on the political, economic, and social values espoused by former president Bill Clinton and his wife, Senator Hillary Clinton further underscore the divisions between Red and Blue States. A solid majority of Red State voters reject the Clinton's values (56%) while 34% agree. Blue State voters are split with 45% responding favorable to the Clinton's values and 47% disagreeing."

On the issue of civil unions and the definition of marriage, the Zogby news release reported:

"Seventy percent of Red State voters side with the proposition that marriage should be confined to a man and a woman. Only 25% support the idea of civil unions. Conversely, Blue State voters are much more divided, with 42% supporting civil unions, while 55% support marriage restrictions."

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

"Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those living in the Red States are married as opposed to 56% in the Blue States. Meanwhile, one in ten (10%) voters in the Red States are single; in the Blue States, one in five (20%)."

Describing the Red-Blue states, the Zogby news release noted:

"In general terms, Gore won the Pacific Coast states, New Mexico, the Great Lakes States, and all of the Northeast except New Hampshire. Bush won every other state."

The Zogby poll also reflected significant splits on such issues as the legitimacy of Bush's election in 2000; voters' political party preferences and self-perceptions such as "progressive" or "conservative"; and gun ownership. Also included in the survey were age, ethnicity, educational level and union membership.

## ZOGBY'S CONCLUSIONS

John Zogby, president and CEO of Zogby International, said in an Internet chat hosted by The Washington Post, "I think that any Democrat starts the campaign with 45% of the vote. It is sort of like the SAT exams where you get 200 just for showing up on Saturday morning. Now obviously there will be a campaign and things that cannot be foreseen — issues of temperament, events not previously foreseen — but I think this is a 50/50 president in a 50/50 nation."

Zogby likened the 2004 presidential race to the 1796 campaign between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, with "each side predicting the end of the world if the other side won. We are extremely and intensely polarized. ...There is a cultural and ideological divide. There is a split on church attendance where the Red States differ from the Blue States [and on] gun ownership, with the Red States different from the Blue States, etc. What I don't see is a Ronald Reagan, a Jack Kennedy an FDR or even a Bill Clinton who attempts to build bridges. I think it [is] troubling."

"The poll is an attempt to get at the core of this division" between the key groupings, Zogby told The Times. "We see significant demographic and ideological differences between... Blue and Red states."

## Legislative breakfast sets record



State Representative Scott Bounds (left), a member of First Church, Philadelphia, talks with David Michel (center), associate executive director for missions strategy at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, and Dan Howard, pastor of First Church, Philadelphia, during the annual Legislative Prayer Breakfast on January 3 at the Baptist Building in Jackson. This year's breakfast enjoyed the highest attendance in the four-year history of the event. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

## Directions to Evangelism Conference

Driving directions to the 2004 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference were inadvertently omitted from promotional material. Directions to the conference, to be held January 26-27 at Country Woods Church, Byram, are as follows:

### From the South

From south of I-20 take I-55 North, Byram Exit. Take a left on to Siwell Road. Drive approximately three miles. Country Woods Church is located at 6737 Siwell Road.

### From the North

From North of I-20 take I-55 South, Byram Exit. Take a right on to Siwell Road. Drive approximately three miles. Country Woods Church is located at 6737 Siwell Road.

The 2004 president race promises to be "very contentious," a Zogby news release noted, adding that "George W. Bush and his Democratic challenger will be campaigning in two different, yet parallel universes."

The poll used a color-coded methodology identifying states that Bush carried as "Red States" and those Gore carried as "Blue States."

On religion, for example, the Zogby news release reported:

"Fifty-seven percent of Red State voters are Protestants, 23% are Catholic, and one percent are Jewish. In Blue America, the religious demographics are vastly different: Protestant, 37%; Catholic, 33%; Jewish just four percent."

"When respondents were asked how they practiced their faith, just over half (51%) of Red State voters said that they attend their local church, synagogue, or mosque either once a week or more often, while a near-majority (46%) of those residing in the Blue States said they attend religious services only on holidays, rarely, or never."

Meanwhile, a poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, also released Jan. 6, noted a divide in how the two political parties are viewed.

"The Republican Party is more widely viewed as being friendly toward religion than the Democrats, and the margin is much wider among whites," a Pew news release carried over U.S. Newswire reported. "By more than two to one, white respondents view the Republican Party as friendly toward religion rather than neutral (58% vs. 26%), while just seven percent think the GOP is unfriendly toward religion."

"Whites are divided in their perceptions of the Democratic Party's attitudes toward religion (41% friendly, 37% neu-

## Fisher resigns Foundation

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) — Hal Fisher, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation for the past eleven-and-a-half years, has announced his resignation effective January 31 to pursue other business interests.

"I have successfully accomplished most of my goals and objectives for the Foundation," Fisher said in a press release issued by the Foundation in early January.

Fisher, a Certified Financial Planner and the son of retired Blue Mountain College President Harold Fisher, said he will serve as a consultant to the Foundation and its board of trustees for at least three months to assist in the transition to a new executive director.

During Fisher's tenure as executive director, assets managed by the Foundation have more than tripled to over \$70 million. The Foundation manages more than 1,200 individual endowments and over 500 individual securities that comprise the Foundation's investments.

The Foundation is an agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention that provides trust and money management services to Mississippi Baptist churches, institutions, and agencies. The Foundation also manages planned and deferred gifts designated to benefit Baptist causes.

"Hal has been a blessing to the Foundation and is to be congratulated for his hard work, vision, and dedication to Christian service," said Paul Breazeale, chairman of the Foundation's trustee board and a Certified Public Accountant in Jackson.

The Foundation's board has established an executive director search committee, which is currently accepting recommendations for the position. For more information, the search committee may be contacted at Mississippi Baptist Foundation, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3210 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 210. E-mail: phutton@mbcb.org.



Fisher



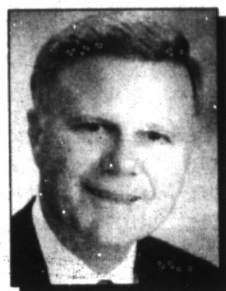
## PRAYER PRIORITY

While many of us may think that prayer is important, few, if any of us, actually make prayer the priority in our lives. Too many times prayer is just an after-thought. The trouble comes, the crisis hits, the illness overwhelms us, all of our resources have been extended, and we say, "There is nothing left to do but pray!"

For Jesus, prayer was never an after-thought, but always a forethought! Whether choosing His disciples or facing the cross, Jesus intensely and intentionally got with the Father in prayer. The disciples wanted to know how to pray, but even more important is the fact that Jesus wanted to teach them how to pray! He wants you and me to pray and He wants us to know what can happen to and through us in prayer when we make it a priority.

Among the few things that Jesus addressed repeatedly in His teachings was the subject of prayer. Prayer was not only close to His heart, but He knew that His disciples would flounder and falter without it. He addressed human needs with prayer. He underscored evangelism with prayer. He sought for more workers to be involved in the Kingdom harvest through prayer. He faced all of His decisions and anchored His future in prayer. Prayer was His priority and He sought to make it ours also!

Why is prayer so important? Well, through prayer we can be free. Prayer, that open door to the heart of God, is available to us and it is free. The important fact is that we can be free when we learn to pray. Let's take a moment and think about the model prayer that Jesus



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

taught and you will see it is laced with wonderful truths.

• Prayer is important because it will **set you free**. According to this marvelous teaching on prayer, Jesus lets us know that we can pray and find the Father involved in providing for our daily sustenance: "Give us this day our daily bread." God cares that you have enough to eat, to wear, and to sustain your life. According to Jesus, if human fathers have enough decency about them that they care about their children, how much more will the Heavenly Father care about His children?

I've known some good dads in my time and I have forever known the goodness of the Heavenly Father who can and will set us free from the burden and the pain of want if we will trust Him.

• Prayer is important because it will **help you see**. I can see so much better when I pray. Sometimes we just rock along in life, leaving God out, spending no time in prayer, and then we wonder why life looks so muddled and why we get so confused and bewildered. You can see more clearly when you pray!

Recently, I had come home from work and had in my arms a stack of books and I was also holding my dictaphone (my small tape recorder). I put the books down on the table and laid the dictaphone down with them, only to have it slide off of

a book onto the table. When it slid off the book, it hit in just the right way to knock open the little compartment where the two Double "A" batteries were housed and they both fell out onto the floor. I saw one of them as it rolled across the floor and I went and picked it up. I then began to look for the other one and could not find it. I looked again into the dictaphone and sure enough both batteries were gone, so I knew it had to be there somewhere.

I continued to look pulling chairs out, pushing things around and, no battery! I went through the process of looking a second time. I shuffled things around again and once again, no battery! I began to think that maybe it had just disappeared. Maybe somehow it disintegrated or simply became invisible! Oh, surely not! I kept looking but, no battery! I thought to myself that I would just have to get another one.

That night, when I went to bed, I laid there thinking, "What in the world could have happened to that battery? Surely it didn't just become invisible, but where did it go?" I knew I had not been near the garbage disposal and I wasn't near any sack of trash, so I was baffled! The next morning I got up with that battery on my mind and I knew that battery had to be there somewhere — it just had to be!

I went back to the table

where I had put the books down, stood there a moment and wondered where that battery could be. After a little thought, I decided I would just get down on my knees and maybe I would be able to see better from that position. I knelt down on the floor and looked around from that vantage point and guess what? Yep! There it was, just where it had been all the time and where it had spent the night. It had been sitting and waiting on me to get on my knees so I could see and find it.

How many times do we spend a lot of energy and thought trying to find, to feel our way along, to see, and yet we are unable to comprehend — that is, until we get on our knees! Then, we begin to see the Lord in a different way and the work of the Kingdom in a completely different way. His church and those who are without Christ are seen differently when we get on our knees!

• Prayer is important because it will **help us flee**. The sinless Savior knew what He faced as He lived here among us. He knew what the disciples were going to encounter. He also knew what you and I were going to experience; so, He tells us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." That is the opening for us to be delivered, to flee from the clutches of Satan, and to not be captured by the roaring lion who is seeking who he may devour.

I strongly and honestly believe that God delivers us when we pray! He can deliver us from the wrong decision. He can help us flee from a wrong experience. He can open a path where we can flee from an entrapment that would kill us. Prayer is more than important, for the believer, it is the priority!

## Graham has surgery after hotel fall

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) — Evangelist Billy Graham is recovering in a Jacksonville hospital after partial hip-replacement surgery on Jan. 6, according to a story in the Florida Times-Union.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association spokesman Larry Ross said Graham, 85, fell during the night in a hotel room on the grounds of Jacksonville's Mayo Clinic, where he was receiving a routine check-up.

When he could not get out of bed the next morning, Graham was taken to St. Luke's Hospital. There, doctors determined he had broken his left hip. The evangelist underwent an operation later that day and is expected to make a full recovery.

According to Ross, Graham still plans to announce his 2004 schedule of crusades this month. "He will have sufficient time for healing and therapy to maintain his ministry as planned," said Ross. "He has said he has no plans to retire until God retires him."

Graham has been a Mayo patient more than 50 years. For the past 10 years he has made the trip from his North Carolina home to Jacksonville twice a year to receive treatment for Parkinson's disease.

## Billy Graham planning Kansas City crusade

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Evangelist Billy Graham will conduct a crusade in Kansas City, Mo., June 17-20 at Arrowhead Stadium, officials with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association announced Jan. 8 during a news conference at the Arrowhead Pavilion adjacent to the 80,000-seat open-air facility.

Billed as The Heart of America Billy Graham Crusade, it will mark the third time Graham has conducted such an event in Kansas City, the last being in 1978.

Graham and the BGEA team are coming "in fear and trembling and in weakness, but with great joy and dependence upon the Holy Spirit," said Cliff Barrows, Graham's longtime associate and song leader who spoke at the news conference attended by several hundred media, area pastors and lay leaders.

Barrows said Graham's broken left hip, which required surgery and a partial replace-

ment Jan. 6 at a hospital in Jacksonville, Fla., would not deter him from his 415th crusade. (See item at right)

"Mr. Graham is doing wonderfully well," Barrows said. "The hospital expects a complete recovery. He'll plan to be here as scheduled, and we're praising God for that."

Larry Turner, vice president of crusades for the BGEA, read an acceptance letter from Graham that expressed how deeply the renowned evangelist wants to return to Kansas City.

"I never expected to still be preaching at the age of 85, and yet my call to proclaim the Gospel is as strong as ever," Graham wrote. "For the past two years, the Lord has given me a burden for Kansas City, and the heart of America. ... Therefore, health permitting, I will be glad to come to Kansas City. My associates and I are honored to join hands with you in proclaiming the Good News, praying that many will accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior."

The idea for a Kansas City crusade began 16 months ago with a phone call to Turner from Dal Shealy, president of the Kansas City-based Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Shealy, a deacon at the 7,000-member First Baptist Church in Raytown, Mo., joined with his pastor, Paul Brooks, to rally church and community support for the crusade. The two Southern Baptists hosted a series of exploratory meetings that grew from 24 attendees to 300. Those meetings led organizers to write Graham to see whether he would come.

The acceptance letter by Graham read at the Jan. 8 news conference made it clear that Graham would follow up his 1967 and 1978 crusades with yet another in 2004.

"The consensus [among the early organizers] was we need a revival in the heart of America," Shealy said. "We need to reach out from the heart of America across America and impact the world for Jesus Christ."

There will be major Southern Baptist and Missouri Baptist Convention participation as crusade preparations take shape.

Rich Hastings, president and chief executive officer of St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City and a member of First Church, Raytown, is serving as crusade chairman while Charles Briscoe, former pastor of Paseo Church in Kansas City, is serving as co-chairman.

Mike Whitehead, a Kansas City attorney and former chairman of deacons at First Church, Raytown, is serving as legal counsel for the crusade as well.

"Paul Brooks and I were praying in Israel, and I prayed at the [Wailing] Wall, 'Lord if you want me to do something, just tell me,'" said Hastings, who served as a counselor at Graham's 1978 crusade. "I came back to Kansas City, I missed a meeting, and the next thing I know I'm chairman."



## NAMES IN THE NEWS

The Children's Choir of Goss Church, Columbia, presented the Christmas musical, *The First Leon*, December 14. Pictured are the choir members.

The GAs of Highland Church, Natchez, made a map of Mississippi with the counties to be colored in as they reached the church goal of \$750 for the Margaret Lackey Mission Offering. The total offering exceeded \$900. Pictured (from left) are Amber Taylor, Mindy McCall, Alesha Wells, Cammi Dunn, and Beth Floyd.

The Acteens of Mt. Zion Church, Columbus, offered used Christian books to members of the church for a donation to raise money for the Lottie Moon Offering. Pictured (from left) are Kacie Hawkins, Niccole Silas, Kimberly Hollis, Emily Sullivan, Morgan Porter, and leaders Sara Enlow and Beverly Sullivan.

A Christmas lunch was given for the senior members of Pleasant Hill Church, Carthage. Pictured (from left, standing) are Verla Callahan, Nell Sims, Malcolm Grafton, Faye Van Wye, Doris Scott, (seated) Bonnie Jean McBeth, Myrtle Parkman, Katie Lou Crane, Margaret Ramsey, Daisy Bone, and Colin McBeth.

William Carey College on the Coast student, Jeanine Phifer Howell, is one of 50 artists selected to receive the 2004 Sidney Myer Fund International Ceramic Award and to have her work exhibited in Victoria, Australia, in March 2004. Howell, a senior art major from Gulfport, is working

on her bachelor of fine arts degree in art with an emphasis in ceramics. Howell recently received an honorable mention, a first place, and a best in show for her ceramic works at the Sarah Gillespie Gallery located at WCC, Gulfport.



GAs of Highland, Natchez



Senior's Luncheon of Pleasant Hill Church, Carthage



Children's Choir of Goss Church, Columbia



Acteens of Mt. Zion Church, Columbus

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

Patrick Alexander was recently ordained to the ministry by Carriage Hills Church, Southaven. Alexander is a graduate of Mississippi State University and Southwestern Seminary. He currently serves as



Stringer, Thomas, Clark, and Magee



Alexander, James Lewis, pastor; and Martha Jane Alexander



Bilbo, pastor; Traci, Logan, Sawyer, and Ruben McDowell

Minister of Students at Buffalo Trail Church, Morristown, Tenn. Pictured (from left) are Alexander, James Lewis, pastor of Carriage Hills, and Alexander's wife, Martha Jane.

**New Hope Church, Foxworth**, recently recognized those with perfect attendance in Sunday School. Pictured (from left) with consecutive years of perfect attendance are B.B. Stringer, 48 years; Jimmy Thomas, 34 years; Chase Clark, 7 years; and Sherrill Magee, 22 years.

**Calvary Church, Columbia**, honored **Reuben McDowell**, on October 12 for ten years as minister of music. Pictured (from left) are Trent Bilbo, pastor, and Traci, Logan, Sawyer, and Reuben McDowell.

**Squire Parsons, Leicester, N.C.**, will be in concert at **Antioch Church, Neshoba**, on January 25 at 10:45 a.m. A love offering will be taken. For more information, call (601) 986-8771.

**Greater Vision** will be at **Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Rea Auditorium**, in **Wesson** January 23 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. This event is sponsored by **Mt. Zion Church, Brookhaven**. For more information, call (601) 833-8018 or (601) 835-1589.



MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

## OBITUARIES

**Lewis A. Drummond, 77**, denominational statesman and former president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., died of a heart attack January 4 in Asheville, N.C., as a complication from treatment for cancer.

Prior to his 1988-92 Southeastern presidency, Drummond was the Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., from 1973-88, and director of the Billy Graham Center there. He taught in Spurgeon's Theological College in London from 1968-73. He was pastor of Ninth and O Church in Louisville from 1964-68 and, earlier, of churches in Alabama and Texas. His wife Betty survives him.

Gospel music veteran **Jake Hess, 76**, died on Jan. 4, at East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, Ala. The youngest of 12 children, Hess was born in Mt. Pisgah, Ala., on Christmas Eve 1927. According to the jakehess.com website, he began singing with his family at the age of five and left home at 16 to join the John Daniel Quartet.

In 1948, the late Hovie Lister selected Hess as the lead singer for his newly formed Statesmen Quartet. Hess solidified his place in gospel music in the 1960s when he formed the Imperials. The group's use of drums and electric guitar and their pop sound paved the way for modern contemporary Christian music. In later years, according to singingnews.com, Hess joined the Masters V quartet. According to singingnews.com, Hess was preceded in death by his wife Joyce in 2000 and is survived by three children, 10 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

**Van Thi Dao "Mary" Pham, 50**, a Southern Baptist missionary to the Philippines, died Dec. 27 in Birmingham, Ala., after a battle with cancer.

Pham, a native of Vietnam, earned a certificate in

preschool education from Vietnam Seminary in Saigon. She immigrated to the United States in 1975 and earned the associate of arts degree from Portland Community College in Oregon. She married Long Pham in 1980.

Pham is survived by her husband; two sons, Benjamin Pham and David Pham; and one daughter, Kristine Pham, all of Birmingham.

**Albert McClellan, 91**, one of the Southern Baptist Convention's key staff members for more than 30 years, died on the morning of Jan. 9 in Nashville after a lengthy illness.

When he retired from the SBC Executive Committee on Dec. 31, 1980, McClellan held the position of associate executive secretary and director of program planning. He joined the Executive Committee staff in 1949, serving 10 years as director of publications, which included responsibility for Baptist Press, the convention's news service. He assumed his program planning assignment in 1959.

McClellan had a hand in the formation of the committee that drafted the SBC's 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement of beliefs and he was one of the 20-plus members of the SBC Peace Committee during the mid-1980s. He authored 14 books and hundreds of articles for denominational publications.

McClellan is survived by two sons, Alan of Nashville and Renick of Chicago; and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife Mabel in 2000.



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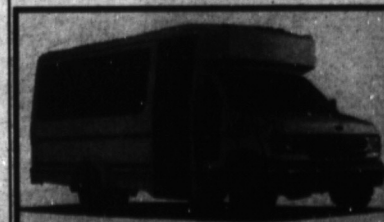
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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

Bruce Jolly, AMD for Covington-Jefferson Davis, presented a plaque for nineteen years of faithful service to **Nancy Parish** (pictured), ministry assistant, at the annual fall association meeting.

On December 5, **Antioch Church, Louisville**, donated their van to missionaries Nina and Wayne Fleming for their mission in Allende, Mexico. Pictured (from left) are Gale Pearson, the Flemings, Jack

Pearson, Albert Glass, and Curtis Griffin.

New Life Church, McLain, licensed **Neal Fairley** to the ministry on January 4. Pictured (from left) are Jerry Rawls, pastor, and Fairley.

New Hope Church, Foxworth, welcomes **Timothy Parker** as pastor. Pictured (from left) are Parker, youth minister **Lars Stensland III**, and minister of music **John Bell**.

The **Tishomingo Baptist Association** gave a special recognition in December to six students completing six courses offered through the Seminary Extension, Nashville, Tenn. Pictured (from left) are Bobby

Cobb, extension director, Louie Williams, Sue Massey, Jesse Massey, Dorinda Luther, Freddy Williams, and Parish Hartley, extension instructor. The seminary extension offers two night classes per semester. For more information, call (662) 438-7546.

**First, Picayune: Centennial Celebration** March 20-21; RSVP to the Centennial Committee, First Church, P. O. Box 477, 39466, or email [fbcpic@fbcpic.org](mailto:fbcpic@fbcpic.org).

**Leflore, Holcomb: Revival** Jan. 25-28; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Harold Danley, evangelist; Wilton Neal, music; Ray Mattox, pianist; for more information, call (662) 227-1259; Larry Livingston, pastor.



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3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name *(John 1:12).*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



Timothy Parker, Lars Stensland III, and John Bell



Nancy Parish



Jerry Rawls, pastor and Neal Fairley



Cobb, Williams, S. Massey, J. Massey, Luther, Williams & Hartley



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## A MODERN LOOK AT THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

By Lee Yancey

In 2004, life as we know it is still life. People are born every day on our planet and people pass away. Some live long and fruitful lives while others die before they have a chance to make their mark. Some die naturally while others die because of the sins of others. Now the possibility of life being enhanced through robotics and nanotechnology threatens to redefine life as we know it. What is a Christian to think or do? Let us examine all the areas regarding the sanctity of human life briefly.



Yancey

### THE TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE (abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia)

It is not natural for us to kill our children. Over the last 31 years, since the *Roe v. Wade* court decision that legalized abortion, more than 42 million babies have been killed. However, in the last several years, the pendulum of public opinion has been swinging back to the right and more and more Americans feel that abortion is wrong. In June 2003, a group called the Center for the Advancement of Women released poll results showing that 51 percent of American women favored either banning abortion completely or allowing it in only rare, extreme cases (rape, incest, threats to the mother's life).

The trend toward ending or restricting abortion is strongest among young people. With the advent of sonogram machines, mothers can now see clear images of their babies in the womb. The old lie that a fetus is simply a mass of cells and not a human being won't hold water any more. Pregnancy Resource Centers have educated young people about alternatives to abortion, providing vital pro-life education to small-town America. Now when a young lady is pregnant and confused, there is an option other than Planned Parenthood.

In 2003, state legislatures passed more than 50 pieces of pro-life legislation. This legislation included human cloning bans, fetal-homicide laws, informed-consent for abortion, abortion-clinic regulations, and parental involvement laws for minors seeking abortions. On the federal level, a ban on partial-birth abortion has finally been passed and signed into law.

Partial-birth abortion is the equivalent of infanticide. It typically involves an abortionist reaching into the uterus, grabbing the unborn baby's leg with forceps, and pulling the still-living-baby into the birth canal, except for the head, which is delib-

erately kept inside the womb. The abortionist then sticks scissors into the back of the baby's skull and spreads the tips of the scissors apart to enlarge the wound. He then removes the scissors, inserts a suction catheter, and sucks the baby's brains out.

The collapsed head is then removed from the uterus. A nurse who witnessed one of these procedures, Brenda Pratt Shafer, said the instant she saw the baby's body go limp from the procedure, she switched from being "pro-choice" to "pro-life." She walked out of that clinic that day and never returned.

The issue of euthanasia was brought to the spotlight last year with the case of Terri Schiavo in Florida. The Florida House voted to give Governor Jeb Bush the authority to intervene on behalf of Mrs. Schiavo, a brain-damaged woman whose feeding tube had been removed by her husband's order. "Terri's Law," as it is now called, would put in place a moratorium on the removal of food and water from those patients that did not have an advance written directive and only in cases where members of a patient's family cannot agree on the appropriate medical care. Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic herself since a diving accident in 1967, said, "If a mentally competent person wanted to forego a feeding tube, then that would be thoroughly documented; it would be notarized, a doctor would review it carefully. Terri Schiavo never had that opportunity." The view that life is sacred includes babies, the handicapped, and the elderly regardless of someone else's judgment of their quality of life.

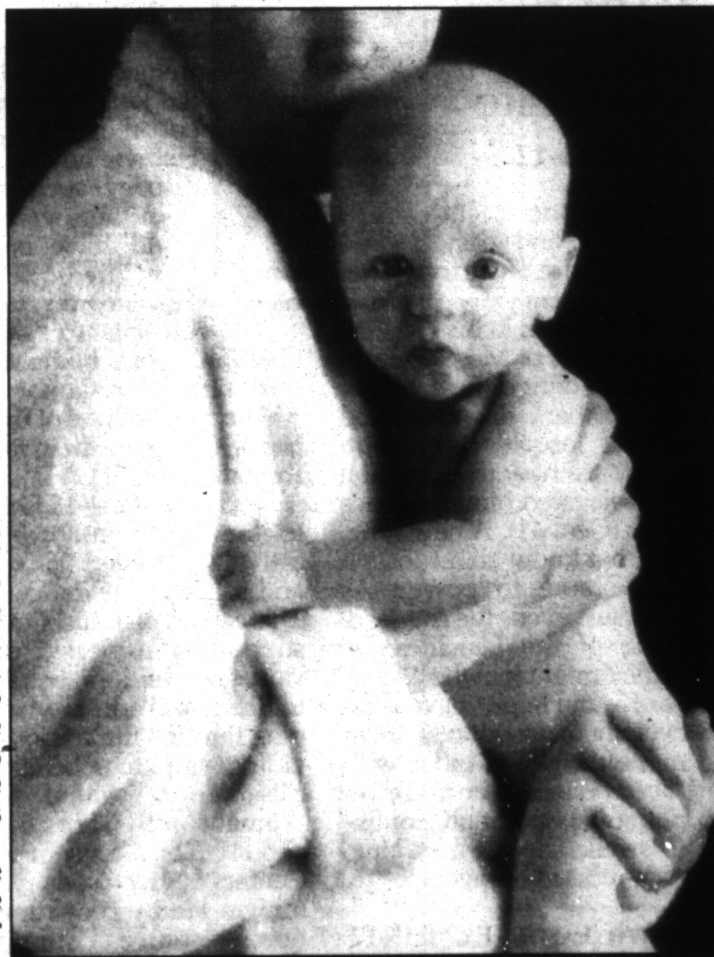
Another big case that fueled the anti-abortion cause in 2003 was the murder of Laci Peterson and her unborn son. Because her husband, Scott Peterson was arrested and charged with double murder (so prosecutors could seek the death penalty), the unborn child had to be deemed a "person" under the same legal definition that applies to her. Conner Peterson did not live long enough to be born but he had a right to live, and his death should be punished.

### THE MAKING OF HUMAN LIFE (reproductive technologies, stem-cell research, cloning, and genetic engineering)

One of the major concerns with reproductive technologies and stem-cell research is how the human embryo is treated. Human life in all forms and stages

is sacred, not a commodity to be used or discarded as we see fit. Many times when couples use in vitro fertilization, extra embryos are created. The number of embryos should be limited, and the ones that are not used should be made available for adoption through organizations like [www.snowflakes.org](http://www.snowflakes.org).

Stem-cell research has the potential to provide cures for many diseases but it is not necessary to create and destroy human embryos to attain these cells. Stem-cells are available in umbilical cords and placenta. Sometimes human cloning is justified by creating embryos for the purpose of stem-cell research. In Great Britain, the



cloned embryos are destroyed after 14 days when their stem-cells are extracted from them. The destruction of human embryos is not something we in America can stand by and ignore.

### THE FAKING OF HUMAN LIFE (nanotechnology, cybernetics, and artificial intelligence)

Our children and grandchildren could be affected by some of our present medical advances. A January 2004 article by Christopher Hook in *Christianity Today* predicts,

"Eradicate cancer. Retain and recall everything you find on the Internet. Give your child a high IQ. Drastically

reduce fatalities of U.S. soldiers involved in wars. Give sight to the blind. Soon, you won't have to be God to fulfill this wish list. But you may not be human, either. Such is the promise and peril of nanotechnology. First defined by engineer and scientist K. Eric Drexler in the '80s and '90s, nanotechnology uses tools that operate on the 'nano' scale. A nanometer is one billionth of a meter in length. The DNA molecule is 2.3 nanometers wide. Nanotechnology, then, deals with the manipulation of matter at the atomic or molecular level and it has ethical implications."

Combining nanotechnology with cyborg technology (interfacing living nervous tissue with electronic devices) will change what it means to be human. Many scholars are anticipating cyborg and nanotech enhancements as a means to forestall aging, or even pursuing immortality. Some scientists, who call themselves "transhumanists," believe that we will re-engineer ourselves to such an extent that a post-human species will be created that are superior to homo sapiens. Katherine Hayles, a professor of English at UCLA, says in her book *How We Became PostHuman* (1999), that "humans can either go gently into that good night, joining the dinosaurs as a species that once ruled the earth but is now obsolete, or hang on for a while longer by becoming machines themselves. In either case, the age of the human is drawing to a close."

The idea that medical advancements will be advantageous to us fuels our desire to see research carried out. We would all like to see cancer cured, yet we must understand that we have opened Pandora's box as we allow the experimental use of nanotechnology and cybernetics. Laws that keep these new areas of science focused on the good they can do for humanity must be passed and strictly enforced. When we tinker with the human body, we are seeking to improve upon a design created in the image of God by God Himself. When the people of Babel aspired to build a tower into the heavens and make a name for themselves, God confused their language and scattered them over the face of the earth. As we grow more scientifically and technologically advanced, we risk the same fate as those who have come before us who tried to outdo God. If we travel down the road of cybernetics, God may scatter us or worse yet, leave us to our own devices.

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY IS JANUARY 18, 2004



## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### God Values Human Life

2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-17; 12:5, 13; Psalms 139:13-16

By Ken Anderson

A study on depression and unintended pregnancies has concluded that women who abort a first pregnancy are at greater risk of long-term clinical depression than women who carry an intended first pregnancy to term. The leading author of the study said the study was consistent with other research that has shown a four to six fold increased risk of suicide and substance abuse associated with prior abortion (British Medical Journal (324) P. 151-152). This research confirms what many already knew and what the Bible clearly teaches.

The scripture sections of this lesson compares David's awe of God's knowing and valuing him even before he was born (Ps. 139:13-16) and his failure to affirm the sanctity of family life and human life (2 Samuel 11

and 12). The lesson also reveals that sin brings irrevocable consequences and that God's forgiveness totally removes one's sin guilt.

**DAVID'S FAILURE TO AFFIRM THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE (2 SAMUEL 11:1-5, 14-17).**

The meeting of David and Bathsheba occurred during the times, armies went to war. Davids statutes allowed him to stay in Jerusalem until the enemy city was ready to be taken. With time on his hands, he saw Bathsheba bathing. His lingering looks lead to desire; desire lead to lust; and lust lead to the act of adultery.

When David received word that Bathsheba was pregnant, he immediately went into a cover up campaign. Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, was called to Jerusalem under the assump-



Anderson

tion of giving David an update on the war. Twice David tried to get Uriah to go home and be with his wife. Then when the baby was born, people would know that Uriah had been home at the appropriate time. Both efforts failed. Then David ordered Joab to send Uriah and others on a suicide mission to ensure Uriah's death. After his death, David married Bathsheba.

**DAVID'S CONFESSION (2 SAMUEL 12:5 AND 13)**

At the risk of his own life, Nathan, the prophet, went to David with a hypothetical case. He asked David to judge a rich man with many flocks who took the only dear sheep of a poor man. David had no trouble deciding that the rich man was morally wrong and with anger gave his judgment. Then to David's utter surprise, Nathan said "Thou are the man." David's cover-up had collapsed.

David, without excuse, confessed his sin. Nathan pronounced that he was forgiven

and the penalty for adultery was removed. The guilt of the sin was totally removed but the consequences would be lasting. Bathsheba's and David's child died. Afterward, David would face continual family problems.

Psalms 139:13-16: Here David is in awe of the sanctity of his own life. David said that before he was born God knew everything about him. God had possessed his reign (KJV) or created his inner most parts (RSV) or inmost being (NIV). He had wove or knitted him together in his mothers womb (vs. 13). Even before he was born to live his first days, they were allotted and scheduled for him (vs. 16).

**APPLICATIONS FROM THIS LESSON:**

• **ABORTION:** Abortion is the end of human life. The overwhelming evidence is in of the ongoing tragic consequences of abortion. Those caught in these tragedies need God's grace.

• **ASSISTED SUICIDES:** Euthanasia is always an assault of the sanctity of human life.

• **PREJUDICE:** God is the source of all human life as creator and

sustainer. Therefore, all human life is sacred. This means every person of every race, gender, ethnicity, or nationality is created in God's image.

• **BATTERED WOMEN:** The sanctity of human life means a strong protest against any action that demeans or denies the dignity of personhood. Battered women in our churches and cultures are crying out for help.

• **CHILD ABUSE:** There is no segment of our society that is immune to the exploitation, brutality, neglect, and sexual abuse of children.

• **FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE ACT:** Readers can have a positive effect on the proposed Mississippi legislative bill entitled The Freedom of Conscience Act. The bill will allow health care providers and institutions to refuse to participate in abortions and other practices related to the sanctity of life. Contact the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for more information on this bill.

Anderson is pastor emeritus of First Church, Saltillo.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Wisdom of Protecting Human Life

Exodus 1:15-17, 20-2:10; Proverbs 24:11-12

By Ann Maniscalco

So God created man in his own image...male and female he created them.... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:27, 31). When the eternal God formed the first human beings, He designed them in His image, enabling them to have fellowship with Him. From the very dawn of creation, we see the importance the Lord places on human life.

Today, self-centeredness is evident in the devaluing of the lives of others. Paul, in writing to Timothy, foresaw this: People will be lovers of themselves... and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God... (2 Tim. 3:2,4). Those living only for themselves may do whatever is necessary to keep their lives comfortable and enjoyable, often including the destruction of those who would hinder this pursuit. Abortion and

assisted suicide seem like a quick and easy way to take care of such problems.

Let's step back in history to the time of Moses. Moses was a descendant of Levi, one of Joseph's brothers (Ex. 1:1-5 and 2:1). All of Joseph's generation had died, as had the Pharaoh who had elevated him to a place of power (Gen. 41). A new king, who did not know about Joseph (Ex. 1:8), came to power. As Pharaoh surveyed the massive multitude of the Israelites, he feared they might join the enemy in case of war. He put slave masters over them to oppress them and made their lives bitter with hard labor (Verses 11 and 14), but the Hebrew population continued to swell. The ruthless king, however, refused to give up.

**ACT WITH FAITH (EX. 1:15-17, 20-21; PROV. 24:11-12):**



Maniscalco

Shiprah and Puah, the midwives, faced a tremendous dilemma; the king had commanded them to kill all Hebrew boys at birth. To disobey such an order from the severe dictator could have cost them their lives. However, they feared God and refused to carry out Pharaoh's plan. Because of their commitment to honor God by preserving the lives of these newborns, God gave them families of their own (vs. 21).

Proverbs 24:11-12 issues a call to the Lord's followers to be actively involved in protecting and salvaging endangered lives. This can involve such activities as supporting neglected or disadvantaged children, helping mentor teens and adults who are slipping through the cracks, and providing care for the elderly. In Mississippi, several Christian Womens Job Corps sites and about 32 Crisis Pregnancy Centers show Gods value for human life by providing education, resources, support and Christian mentoring. We can't

turn our backs and say, we didn't know about this (vs. 12). God holds us responsible and will reward those who selflessly minister in such ways.

**ACT WITH DETERMINATION (EX. 1:22-2:4):**

When the king couldn't get the midwives to obey him, he commandeered his own people. They were to aid in the Hebrew population control by throwing newborn boys into the Nile. A couple from the tribe of Levi was blessed with a beautiful son, and the mother managed to hide him three months. Realizing her son was no ordinary baby (Heb. 11:23), she was determined to save his life. She relinquished her son to the Nile, not according to the Kings edict, but according to the plan of the One who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will... (Eph. 1:11). Are you willing to act with similar determination and faith to mirror God's concern for the lives of all people?

**ACT WITH CREATIVITY (EX. 2:5-10):**

As Miriam waited to see what would become of her brother, Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe. She saw the basket, had it retrieved, and cradled it in her arms. A tiny cry was heard, and her heart melted. Miriam stepped forward, offering to call a Hebrew woman to nurse the infant. God's providence enabled Moses own mother to nurture her son in his tender years.

Moses lived to become one of God's greatest servants. However, we can only wonder about the countless lives that were snuffed out. Today such destruction continues a recent yearly total reveals 3,566 reported abortions performed in Mississippi. Such atrocities rob us of future great leaders and humanitarians, and scar the lives of the parents and families. May God soften our hearts to do what we can to avert such tragedies! For ways you can help, contact your local associational office or a Crisis Pregnancy Center near you.

Maniscalco is member of First Church, Ocean Springs.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST  
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# THE VILLAGE VIEW



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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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OTM CD HYORR SVGN

DV AOHH CT DYOD

MOQ, HOC DY DYN

RVEM XVM, DYOD C

UCRR SOKHN DYN HKT

DV XV MVUT OD TVVT,

OTM C UCRR MOEZNT

DYN NOEDY CT DYN

SRNOE MOQ:

OGVH NCXYD: TCTN

Clue: G = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 10:45

# Canadians wage battle; fear for neighbor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In 1997, Canadian resident Hugh Owens became fed up with the progress homosexual activists had made in his country, decided to do something about it.

A Christian, Owens bought an advertisement in the local newspaper, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix. The ad was simple: It listed Bible references from Leviticus, Romans and 1 Corinthians on one side, an "equals" symbol in the middle, and two stick men holding hands on the other side. A circle with a slash across it — the universal sign for prohibition — covered the stick figures.

The ad was intended to showcase biblical truth, but it ended up getting him and the newspaper in trouble. Citing Canadian law, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission ordered Owens and the newspaper each to pay \$1,500 to three homosexuals who had filed a complaint. A court subsequently upheld the decision.

Such stories are disheartening to Canadian Christians, who have seen homosexual activists advance their cause much further than has happened in America. While U.S. conservatives are battling against the legalization of same-sex marriage, Canadian conservatives lost that battle months ago. It is already legal in two Canadian provinces, and the federal government has pushed for a national law.

While Canadian conservatives haven't given up hope, they realize they have an uphill fight.

"It's not over in Canada, but it's going to be a lot harder now ...to recover those freedoms and to shore them up," Darrel Reid, president of Focus on the Family Canada, told Baptist Press (BP). "Things are happening very quickly in the States,

and if Christians don't stand up there they could lose those [freedoms], too."

For many years Americans have considered Canadians to be their good friends to the north. The border is open, and in some ways the two countries are similar. Yet on an increasing number of issues, they are polar opposites.

One of those issues is homosexuality. While polls consistently show that more than 60% of Americans oppose same-sex marriage, polls in Canada show something much different. Most polls there show close to a 50-50 split, and one poll last year had support for legalization at 56%.

The change in Canada has been dramatic. In 1999 Parliament passed by a vote of 216-55 a non-binding but significant resolution affirming the traditional definition of marriage. Just last September a similar resolution, with almost identical language, failed 137-132.

Then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien, one of those who flipped on the issue, said society had "evolved." That vote came months after courts in British Columbia and Ontario legalized same-sex marriage in those provinces.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the Massachusetts high court ruled in November for same-sex marriage — something that just 10 years ago would have been unthinkable.

The Canadian federal government is telling its churches that they won't be affected by the legalization of same-sex marriage and won't have to preside over such ceremonies. Yet such talk isn't very comforting to the nation's Christians.

"The very same politicians that are now assuring us that clergy aren't

threatened by this are the same politicians who three years ago were telling us that there was no way that marriage was going to be redefined, that that was just ridiculous," Janet Epp Buckingham, general legal counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, told BP.

Said Reid: "Those fears are absolutely well-founded, regardless of what the government says and regardless of what the homosexual rights activists say."

The possibility of being forced to preside over same-sex ceremonies is a "huge fear," Buckingham added.

"I know some clergy who have already been approached by gay or lesbian couples asking about them performing marriage ceremonies for them," she said.

"So far we don't know of any legal challenges that have been brought," Buckingham said.

There are other concerns, though. Will the Canadian government continue to give churches viewed as discriminatory a special tax status? Will Christian schools be required to teach that same-sex "marriage" is normal?

"[I]t affects a whole wide range of religious freedom issues and opens up a whole new area of potential court cases," Buckingham said.

In addition to their faith, American and Canadian Christians also share a common fear of their respective court systems. In both countries, the same-sex "marriage" push has taken place in the judiciary.

"This has never been a democratic project by homosexual activists," said Reid of Focus on the Family Canada.

"This has been almost completely driven by the courts," he pointed out.

## SBC entities launch 'Churches Praying' initiative

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In an effort to promote supportive prayer among the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), a new initiative called Churches Praying for Churches enables both individual believers and church prayer groups to pray not only for their own churches but for every Southern Baptist church during 2004.

Launched Jan. 1 by the SBC Executive Committee, the North American Mission Board, and the Empowering Kingdom Growth Task Force, Churches Praying for Churches is seeking to link a network of churches in prayer to pray for God's empowerment and engage them in His churches across the convention for Kingdom growth.

To be a part of the prayer effort, Southern Baptist individuals or church prayer groups may register online at [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net) or by calling toll-free (888) PRAYER2. Registrants should provide their name, e-mail address, and church identification number, which may be found by searching for their home church in the ChurchSearch database at [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net). Each registrant will be assigned a personal volunteer identification number.

Registrants can commit to pray for one to five Southern Baptist churches each week for 12 weeks, including lifting up specific requests presented by the sister churches.

"What could be better than to pray for our sister churches and their ministries, that God might bless them in a mighty way?" Morris H. Chapman, president of the Executive Committee, said in a sound clip at

[www.oneinamillionprayer.com](http://www.oneinamillionprayer.com).

Chapman was among the chief organizers of the prayer effort, drawing from his experience as pastor of First Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, during the 1980s. The church was giv-

ing 14% of its budget through Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program, but church members began to pray about what more they could do in association with the convention.

Churches Praying for Churches also allows individual churches to submit specific prayer requests, such as church growth, evangelism and mission opportunities or general prayer requests for the pastor, staff and members. Requests may be made at the same location as registration at [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net).

Many churchgoers are familiar with the passage from 2 Chronicles 7:14, which states, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

"I know that's the prayer of every Southern Baptist for our nation and for our convention," Chapman said. "Would you join us in this prayer effort? It could result in the greatest blessing which God would ever pour out upon this convention. May we pray for spiritual awakening, may we pray for revival, may we abandon self for the cause of Christ and just say, 'Lord, I can't, but You can help us reach this nation for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom.'"

